



Public Meeting Comments 6.29.21

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|-------------------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|----------|--------------|---|
| 6/29/2021 8:06:43 | June 29, 2021 | Census Data | Lynne Hudson | 85704 | self | <p>If I understand correctly, (1) AZ law requires that Census data be used to draw redistricting maps; (2) Federal law requires the Census Bureau to report data in a way that is as complete as possible while also protecting the privacy of citizens; (3) Improvements in computer power that have made privacy protection more difficult prompted the Census Bureau to adopt a new reporting method referred to as differential privacy; (4) this new method is now being challenged in the courts, creating additional delays to those resulting from the covid pandemic. AND YET, redistricting must be completed in a timely way because the upcoming elections are not going to be postponed.</p> <p>I am not a statistician, but the method used by the Census Bureau to develop and test differential privacy seems reasonable to me. That method was to reanalyze the data from the 2010 Census using the new procedure and compare the outcomes. The first question to be answered was: Did the new procedure better protect the privacy of citizens? If it didn't, there would have been no purpose in changing. The second question to be answered was: Did the new procedure create more error in the data? This is important because Census data are used for many purposes in addition to redistricting, most notably in how government funds are allotted to programs. Counting as many residents as possible and identifying their demographic characteristics enable us not only to allot Congressional and legislative districts fairly, but also to get programs and services to the people who need them most.</p> <p>We all need to remember that no system of analysis will avoid error completely. Both systems of data analysis, the one used in 2010 and the one adopted for 2020, are subject to error. I am not a statistician, but if I understand correctly, what the experts who did these comparisons concluded was that while the 2020 reanalysis using differential privacy did produce somewhat different results in many categories, these differences were not substantial enough in type or degree to outweigh the improvements made in protecting the privacy of respondents.</p> <p>Having said that, I am also reminded of practical concerns that the consultant pointed out last week about the delay caused by the pending court cases: (1) these legal cases may be drawn so narrowly as to not be applicable to Arizona; and (2) these cases may be resolved too late to guide your work anyway. I am left wondering if the AZ consultant's advice might be to proceed without delay. It is at least possible that while such legal decisions may arrive too late to impact redistricting, they could still result in some actions that could improve funding programs down the road.</p> |
| 6/29/2021 8:08:37 | June 29, 2021 | VII | Rita Day | 86301 | Myself | <p>EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SCHMIT: It would be helpful if the Executive Director's reports be written and posted on the IRC website. This would help with clarity of the issues presented. So far, much of the reporting has been unclear and lacking in detail.</p> |
| 6/29/2021 8:11:04 | June 29, 2021 | VI-mapping consultant | Rita Day | 86301 | Myself | <p>Mapping Software- Regarding software used by Timmons Group/NDA: ERSI- what provisions are being made to demonstrate how this software works? Also, please plan for training sessions for the public. So those of the public who are interested can try their hand as drawing maps.</p> |



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| 6/29/2021 8:15:04 | June 29, 2021 | Differential Privacy | Hope Busto-Keyes | 85743 | Self | Dear Commissioners, Regarding differential privacy, do you plan to accept the Epsilon values (E=17.14 for a person's file and E=2.4 for the housing unit data) announced by the Census Bureau or do you plan to challenge the use of these values? And, why will you accept or challenge the values? Thank you. |
| 6/29/2021 8:19:00 | June 29, 2021 | Public comments | M. E. Dunn | 86303 | Myself - a very concerned citizen | I find it unfortunate that the Chair, while acknowledging the value of the public comments, then what follows regarding them is not infrequently a dismissal of the validity of many of the arguments of the commenters. I also ask that other commissioners be given a bit more time to unmute themselves and say something before the Chair takes the floor back. |
| 6/29/2021 8:21:14 | June 29, 2021 | VII | Joan McDermott | 86403 | Mohave County Democratic Central Committee & the veteran community | There is a great need in Mohave County to understand the Commission's mandate and very specifically how the redistricting decisions are made. We find a pervasive misunderstanding of Proposition 106. It might be helpful for the Commission to reach out to local media – print, radio, social media – in advance of your visits to help educate as many citizens as possible. Not only would that garner more interest in the visits, but, hopefully, would lead to more productive questions and observations regarding our concerns and perspectives. |
| 6/29/2021 8:26:21 | June 29, 2021 | Listening Tour - Legal Team | David Dunn | 86303 | | Thank you commissioners Lerner and Mehl. They are "still working" on the specifics of dates, locations, agenda, soliciting feedback mechanisms. They are giving the information to Mr Schmitt and then what? Time IS ticking and to come to these meetings EVERY week and advance no further is very concerning. The answers provided by counsel is very inappropriate and lacking. And, to think that they are the ones doing this - for billable hours - when in my view much of it should be an administrative matter handled by the Ex Dir and staff makes it even more concerning. The commissioners are seemingly being given very little to work with and this is going to be consequential as time is of the essence. |
| 6/29/2021 8:26:33 | June 29, 2021 | timmons/DNC report | Susan Bickel | 85718 | self | Thank you Chair Neuberg and Commissioner Lerner, for pressing the mapping consultants for more complete and comprehensive updates. |
| 6/29/2021 8:29:25 | June 29, 2021 | V | Diane Boman | 86303 | Myself | I am concerned that the entire commission is not getting the information that Erika Neuberg and Brian Schmidt are getting. This should be given to all commissioners so that they can be prepared to ask question during the meeting. |
| 6/29/2021 8:29:45 | June 29, 2021 | V. Mapping consultant | Rita Day | 86301 | Myself | I appreciate commissioner Lerner's request to provide dates for training of mapping software, etc. Also, the public needs training so they can be involved in mapping, if they wish. Please provide dates for training on mapping software for public. I also appreciate Nueberg's follow up request to get dates for training and asking for more clarification of what's going on behind the scenes and not just saying these items were discussed with Executive Director Schmit. These meetings should provide more detail and clarification and not just explanations that the information was provided to Ex.Dir. Schmit. These types of responses don't help provide public awareness of what's going on behind the scenes. |
| 6/29/2021 8:31:05 | June 29, 2021 | V. Update from the mapping Consultants, Timmons/NDC. | Nelson Morgan | 85054 | Self | NDC suggested that the alternate grid maps would come from "flipping a coin" (obviously a reference to some computed mechanism, e.g., using some pseudo-random number generator). One might have thought that moving along some underlying dimension with some basis in either the data or the criteria might be part of this. But let's assume for a moment that the variation is totally random. Even in that case, it will be important for the commission to have some analysis provided by NDC so that the IRC members can understand any potential consequences of the different options. Otherwise they will not be prepared to make meaningful choices. Perhaps this is the intention, but it would be important to hear what analyses will be provided along with these maps. The Commission is dependent on NDC's expertise to provide conceptual handles on the flood of data that will be provided. |



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| 6/29/2021 8:32:00 | June 29, 2021 | V | Diane Boman | 86303 | Myself | The budget update is not in print form and no update of expenditures to date. Will this be put on the website? |
| 6/29/2021 8:35:21 | June 29, 2021 | V. Legal counsel; VI. Ex Dir Report | María-Elena Dunn | 86303 | Myself; a weekly listener | Did I just hear right? They will give you details as you need to know? Really? My understanding is that they are your "employee" and the way that would normally work is you tell them what you need to know and by when. Every week they come with "we will TRY to have that back to you next week." And, nothing changes. AND, then, while we are on the Ex Dir's report: once again NO written report shared on the screen. WEEKS ago Commissioner Watchman requested written reports on current fiscal year budget plus details on the upcoming one and we, at least the public, have not seen any of this! Sorry, but much of what we do see, it appears that we have a case of the tail wagging the dog and that should not be acceptable. |
| 6/29/2021 8:41:05 | June 29, 2021 | VIII | Diane Boman | 86303 | myself | I think you should be receiving a basic outline line from Brian Schmidt on the public presentation and all aspects of it. Go through these one by one and get comments from each commissioner. This will go nowhere without discussion. |
| 6/29/2021 8:41:38 | June 29, 2021 | VIII | Rita Day | 86301 | Myself | Great to know the public will have access to training for mapping software and that next week we should know schedule for stock IRC presentation for public use. |
| 6/29/2021 8:51:58 | June 29, 2021 | VRA Constitutional Criteria | Deborah Howard | 85308 | Self | Please do not go into executive session to discuss VRA and constitutional criteria. These are laws - long standing - there is no new ground at this point requiring private legal consultation. Your increased understanding can happen in public session --- It is okay - and even desirable for the public to see you discuss and learn and develop a common understanding. |
| 6/29/2021 9:11:21 | June 29, 2021 | V | Diane boman | 86303 | myself | What provision are being made to provide training on ESRI so the public can provide input? What format must the maps be in to be acceptable for submittal? We are getting down to the wire and this process must start prior to the upcoming public meetings so citizens can provide adequate feedback. |
| 6/29/2021 9:14:03 | June 29, 2021 | V. Update from the mapping consultants, Timmons/NDC | Virginia Dotson | 85902 | self | When you draft the preliminary grid maps, please keep in mind the interests of rural and tribal communities. Such communities have a stronger voice when they are unified, even though the district may seem very large. Please do not revert to past solutions which combined a small piece of Maricopa County with a swath of rural region to construct "pie-shaped" districts. This approach split up rural and tribal communities into several districts, and guaranteed that only Maricopa County would be heard. |
| 6/29/2021 9:18:35 | June 29, 2021 | Regarding Travel Schedule | Janell Hunt | 85143 | Myself as an Arizona citizen/voter | Commissioners: Thank you once more for the work you are doing on the Independent Redistricting Commission. One of the issues I see as most important coming up is the Public Hearing Schedule, since the first hearings are just weeks away. My comments today will be just short and sweet: Please get us detailed information about the venues and meeting times, the process for interested citizens to register to attend, the format in which you will receive statements (in person and through online methods), and any other things that you may want us to know as individuals and groups as we prepare to attend. Thanks again for considering our comments regarding these and other matters. We are doing what we can to see the IRC plan will produce the best maps possible. Stay safe and hydrated in this heat, and best wishes as we celebrate our nation's Independence Day. Janell Hunt, San Tan Valley |
| 6/29/2021 9:27:09 | June 29, 2021 | XI. Discussion and possible action on the scheduling of future meetings: | Virginia Dotson | 85902 | self | Regarding your tentative schedule of "listening tour" sites in Apache County, Window Rock is a good, central location for the in-person meetings. But please consider adding Teec Nos Pos as a satellite site. It is an important crossroads for its region, and it is a two and one-half hour drive from Window Rock. It has a Chapter House, a County Road Yard building and a campus of Navajo Technical University located together in the same area. This far northern part of Apache County deserves your attention. Thank you. |
| 6/29/2021 9:30:30 | June 29, 2021 | Key Census Datum | Lynne Hudson | 85704 | self | For the purposes of redistricting, would it be important to compare how voting age population census data differed across AZ geographic areas using the 2010 and 2020 analyses? |



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| 6/29/2021 10:05:26 | June 29, 2021 | IX. Discussion and Possible Action on census data, census delays and ways to mitigate its disruption B. | Nelson Morgan | 85054 | Self | <p>I understand that it is sometimes necessary to go into Executive Session. But when you are discussing with attorneys the application of the VRA to your current process, surely there were matters discussed that did not need to be private. It seems to me (perhaps naively) that you could, after the E.S., openly describe some of these latter matters in open session. The lack of any such summary is quite unfortunate, since, while the general discussion of the VAR was quite interesting, hearing how it would apply to the current process would be of the greatest interest to those of us who are monitoring your efforts closely. Thank you.</p> |
| 6/29/2021 10:09:13 | June 29, 2021 | V. Update from mapping consultants | Betty Bengtson | 85718 | League of Women Voters of Arizona. | <p>I found today's update from the mapping consultants and the subsequent discussion very disturbing. The commissioners are obviously in the dark about what is being planned and discussed by the consultants and the ED. Isn't there regular communication between meetings from the consultants to the Commissioners? Commissioners need to be brought into those talks immediately and provided with draft planning documents and the opportunity to comment. The IRC appears to be yielding too much of its responsibility and authority to its mapping and legal consultants. With respect, the Commissioners need to be driving the process.</p> <p>One reason given for hiring Timmons Group/NDC was that they would be able to work quickly because Arizona would be their only state redistricting client. They have not appeared to be moving quickly and the information they provide each week is amazingly sparse. For example, for two or more weeks Mark Flahan has reported they are working on a social and economic database, but said nothing about the source of the data they are using.</p> <p>It is the Commissioners who need to come to an agreement about definitions of communities of interest and competitiveness, based on information that is presented and subsequent discussion among the Commissioners. On behalf of the League of Women Voters of Arizona I urge the current IRC to agree to and publish such definitions. It would provide clarity for the Commissioners, their staff and consultants, and for the public.</p> <p>As an example, the first IRC (2001) adopted the following definitions which appear on the archived 2001 Commission website at: https://azredistricting.org/2001/Definitions.asp.</p> |



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| 6/29/2021 10:46:13 | June 29, 2021 | Public Comment | Jennifer Mindock | 85364 | Self | <p>I am very concerned that redistricting be as fair as possible and have been trying to keep up with the weekly meetings and comments . It is gratifying to hear members' attention to concerns about including the public as often as they do; thank you to all of you for that! There are several items that relate to this issue of public access that I wish to address here:</p> <p>1) My schedule requires me to view mostly recorded meetings. Because the public comment window opens and closes with the live session of the meeting, I am not usually able to use it. Do you have an alternative format for my comments? If the general IRC email given out on the website is intended for this, why isn't it included on the same webpage as the one that brings up the public comment form I am using now? If I use the other email will my comments be sure to be viewed by the commissioners and shared with the public as is the case with my live comments?</p> <p>2) I would like to suggest the a "week comment box" with a designated email address that can provide the same function as that of the live public comment forum only with a wider window. It would be free to set up and hopefully your tech people could link it as an addendum or separate link on under the regular comment public comment link. Today I am happy to be attending your meeting live so I can submit a comment but instead of following the conversation closely, I am writing this comment. I will have to view the recorded meeting to catch up! I don't see any of the commissioners composing comments during the meetings; a second weekly public comment forum would avoid this problem and make the system more citizen friendly. (Commissioner Lerner's solution to letting people check meeting results quickly (video time tags on the agenda) is an example of how the commission has made simple, respectful steps to improve community communication, perhaps the addition of a second designated " weekly comment box" could do this as well.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration</p> |
| 6/29/2021 10:51:45 | June 29, 2021 | IT Staff | Sharon Edgar | 86004 | self | <p>May we have an update on the hiring of an IT Officer? We have not had an update on that position for several weeks. I encourage the Commission to hire an experienced IT professional who can ensure that publicly submitted data is captured and organized so that it is visible to the public and useful to the Commission. To this end, please consider providing a searchable database for all public comments, mailed and emailed letters, "contact us" comments, and public remarks made in public hearings.</p> |
| 6/29/2021 10:56:11 | June 29, 2021 | Timmons/NDC Update | Sharon Edgar | 86004 | self | <p>I am concerned about the organization and accessibility of publicly submitted "data" that relates to Communities of Interest and district lines. Is the Commission relying on Timmons Group/NDC to organize and catalogue public comments, letters, emails, "contact us" comments, public hearing testimony, and maps submitted by the public? Right now, there are several avenues to submit "data" with more coming through the mapping toolkit and public hearings, but how that data will be incorporated into the mapping process is not clear.</p> <p>I encourage the Commission to require that all mapping-related "data" be made public, and to clarify whether that is the responsibility of Timmons/NDC and/or the responsibility of an IT staff hired by the Commission.</p> |



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| 6/29/2021 10:56:51 | June 29, 2021 | Public Comment | Deborah Howard | 85308 | Self | <p>Dear Commissioners,</p> <p>This morning Chairwoman Neuberg stated that Snell and Wilmer had previously agreed they would not represent candidates, political parties, or political committees. I applaud this decision and the expansion of excluded entities from their continued political consulting practice. The question remains:</p> <p>What is the rationale and justification that continued political consulting for consultants, lobbyists, ballot measure and independent expenditure committees, municipalities, corporations, election-related vendors, trade associations and other tax-exempt organizations, and individual donors and political contributors does not create either a real or perceived conflict of interest?</p> <p>Again, I ask that you establish PUBLIC policies, procedures, and protocols for standardized and regular disclosures of the work Snell and Wilmer is conducting that intersects with the interests of redistricting and share that with the public. The IRC and the public deserves this as a bare minimum.</p> <p>Again, the internal processes at Snell and Wilmer are in place to protect the firm and their lawyers, not the IRC or the public.</p> <p>Again, neither the IRC, nor the public, should be asked to accept at face value the internal processes of the firm. The IRC and the public deserve more. At the very least, the IRC should be provided the reports/analyses/approvals created by the ethics/conflict of interest officer at the law firm.</p> <p>That you continue to accept this obvious, ongoing, and evolving threat to the integrity of your redistricting work is confounding. Especially in light of the excessive efforts taken to seemingly limit legal exposure in other minor areas, such as posting transcripts, or knowing the addresses of incumbents, or the manner in which you address numbering the districts. These risks are of completely different magnitudes. But they all add up to more risk.</p> <p>I appreciate the work you are doing and the very real challenges you face in reconciling competing criteria and competing interests in the state to draw fair maps. The real and perceived conflicts of interest brought to you by selected legal counsel is so unnecessary. But it remains. Inexplicably.</p> |
| 6/29/2021 11:00:00 | June 29, 2021 | IX. Discussion and Possible Action on census data, census delays and ways to mitigate its disruption. C. | Nelson Morgan | 85054 | Self | <p>Re the mechanisms for assessing competitiveness: I'm quite familiar with Markov Chains, but I don't know how they are used (or are proposed to be used) to assess competitiveness. If there could be some links or pointers to an explanation that would be great. The other criteria listed (such as the well known Mann-Whitney test) are clear.</p> |
| 6/29/2021 11:32:26 | June 29, 2021 | Timmons/NDC Updates | Sharon Edgar | 86004 | self | <p>Mark Flahan mentioned that they would provide training on the mapping toolkit in the beginning of August. Is this a comfortable time for the Commission, given that the proposed listening tour ends August 8th? Perhaps Timmons/NDC does not have the staff to prepare for the listening tour AND install the mapping toolkit in the same timeframe.</p> |
| 6/29/2021 11:35:24 | June 29, 2021 | Legal Presentations | Sharon Edgar | 86004 | self | <p>Thank you for providing the legal presentations during the public meeting.</p> |